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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of	:	
Kaplan	:	
Application No. 09/751,159	:	DECISION
Filed/Deposited: 28 December, 2000	:	
Attorney Docket No. 129250-002064/US	:	

This is a decision on the papers filed on 8 September, 2010, considered as a petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181 (no fee) requesting withdrawal of the holding of abandonment in the above-identified application, alternatively, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) for revival of an application abandoned due to unintentional delay.

NOTE:

The papers considered as the instant petition were received into the Office of Petitions for determination only at this writing.

Petitioner has not followed the clear language of the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I) as to the proper showing requirements for relief pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181—*inter alia*, Petitioner has not been timely in seeking relief under the Rule.

Ignoring the clear language and intent of the regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2, Petitioner inappropriately refers to conversations averred to have taken place with Office personnel. As one registered to practice before the Office, Petitioner is aware that all practice before the Office is in writing (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.2¹) and the proper authority for action on any matter in this regard are the statutes (35 U.S.C.), regulations (37 C.F.R.) and the commentary on policy (MPEP). Therefore, no telephone discussion may be controlling or considered authority for Petitioner's action(s).

¹ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2 provide:

§1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent and Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.

The petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is **DISMISSED**; the petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **GRANTED**.

As to the Request to Withdraw
the Holding of Abandonment

Petitioner is directed to the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I) for guidance as to the proper showing requirements for relief pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181.

Petitioner appears not to comply with the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I)—as discussed below, Petitioner has failed to satisfy the showing requirements set forth there. Petitioner may find it beneficial to review that material and move step-wise through that guidance in the effort to satisfy the showing requirements (statements and supporting documentation).

As to the Allegations
of Unintentional Delay

The requirements of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee therefor, a reply, a proper statement and/or showing of unintentional delay under the regulation, and, where applicable, a terminal disclaimer and fee

Petitioners' attentions always are directed to the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(II).

BACKGROUND

The record reflects as follows:

Following the final Office action mailed on 3 July, 2006, with reply due absent extension of time on or before 3 October, 2006:

- On 1 September, 2006, Petitioner filed an amendment after final, which the Examiner refused to enter and Petitioner—as one registered to practice before the Office—knew was not as of right and not a proper reply² if it did not *prima facie* place the application in condition for allowance, and on 19 September, 2006, the Examiner mailed an Advisory Action;

² A proper reply is an amendment *prima facie* placing the application in condition for allowance, a Notice of Appeal, or an RCE (with fee and submission under 37 C.F.R. §1.114). (See: MPEP §711.03(c).)

- On 3 October, 2006, Petitioner filed a Notice of Appeal with fee;
- On 4 December, 2006, Petitioner filed an Amendment, viewed by the Examiner as another amendment after final (see below);
- On 5 December, 2006, Petitioner asserted that he was not required to file a brief, demanded refunds, which demand appears not to have been granted, and appears to have filed a brief notwithstanding his assertion that no such filing was required;
- On 13 February, 2007, the Examiner mailed a second Advisory Action, and refused to enter the 4 December, 2006, amendment, which Petitioner—as one registered to practice before the Office—knew was not as of right and not a proper reply³ if it did not *prima facie* place the application in condition for allowance;
- On 27 February, 2007, the Examiner mailed a Notice of Non-Compliant Brief (as to the 5 December, 2006, submission), with reply due absent extension of time on or before 27 March, 2007;
- On 20 March, 2007, the Examiner mailed an Interview Summary, noting that Petitioner had failed to file a proper amendment, and the existing amendment would not be entered;
- On 27 March, 2007, Petitioner submitted what he asserted was a “Corrected” appeal brief;
- On 18 July, 2007, the Examiner mailed a Notice of Abandonment, and stated therein that Petitioner again had failed to file a proper reply on 27 March, 2007, with properly amended and properly cancelled claims as required;
- It appears, therefore, that the application went abandoned after midnight 27 March, 2007.

Thereafter, the record is silent as to any action and any papers filed by Petitioner for more than three (3) years, and activity then occurs of record only with a 5 May, 2010, letter from the Office—reminding Petitioner therein of the requirements and constraints of the regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2,⁴ a reminder that Petitioner ignored in the instant petition—that directed Petitioner to the appropriate provisions of the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c). Even then, the record again is silent until Petitioner filed the instant petition more than four (4) months later on 8 September, 2010, pursuant, alternatively, to 3 C.F.R. §1.181 or to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).

³ A proper reply is an amendment *prima facie* placing the application in condition for allowance, a Notice of Appeal, or an RCE (with fee and submission under 37 C.F.R. §1.114). (See: MPEP §711.03(c).)

⁴ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2 provide:

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In essence, Petitioner's averment:

- as to the request to withdraw the holding of abandonment is that he did not have to respond to the Examiner's requirements because he already had done so; and
- as to the petition to revive is that he was filing the petition (with fee), the reply in the form of a request for continued examination (with fee) and a submission pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.114 in the form of an amendment, and was making the statement that the entire delay from the due date of the reply to the filing of the instant petition was unintentional.

The history above demonstrates and the record is clear that Petitioner repeatedly failed to reply timely and properly to the Notices of the Examiner, and has failed to make the showing as outlined in the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I). Moreover, Petitioner's reply to the Notice of Abandonment was late—more than forty-six months after abandonment and nearly thirty-eight (38) months after Notice thereof—under the Rule.

Thus, Petitioner failed to make the showing and the timely filing required pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181 as discussed below in the citation(s) from the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP).

With regard to Petitioner's request to withdraw the holding of abandonment pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181, the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I) provides in pertinent part as to non-receipt:

The showing required to establish nonreceipt of an Office communication must include a statement from the practitioner describing the system used for recording an Office action received at the correspondence address of record with the USPTO. The statement should establish that the docketing system is sufficiently reliable. It is expected that the record would include, but not be limited to, the application number, attorney docket number, the mail date of the Office action and the due date for the response.

Practitioner must state that the Office action was not received at the correspondence address of record, and that a search of the practitioner's record(s), including any file jacket or the equivalent, and the application contents, indicates that the Office action was not received. A copy of the record(s) used by the practitioner where the non-received Office action would have been entered had it been received is required.

A copy of the practitioner's record(s) required to show non-receipt of the Office action should include the master docket for the firm. That is, if a three month period for reply was set in the nonreceived Office action, a copy of the master docket report showing all replies docketed for a date three months from the mail date of the nonreceived Office action must be submitted as documentary proof of nonreceipt of the Office action. If no

such master docket exists, the practitioner should so state and provide other evidence such as, but not limited to, the following: the application file jacket; incoming mail log; calendar; reminder system; or the individual docket record for the application in question.⁵

With regard to Petitioner's request to withdraw the holding of abandonment pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181, the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I) provides in pertinent part as to timely filing:

37 C.F.R. §1.10(c) through §1.10(e) and §1.10(g) set forth procedures for petitioning the Director of the USPTO to accord a filing date to correspondence as of the date of deposit of the correspondence as "Express Mail." A petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment relying upon a timely reply placed in "Express Mail" must include an appropriate petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.10(c), (d), (e), or (g) (see MPEP §513). When a paper is shown to have been mailed to the Office using the "Express Mail" procedures, the paper must be entered in PALM with the "Express Mail" date.

Similarly, applicants may establish that a reply was filed with a postcard receipt that properly identifies the reply and provides *prima facie* evidence that the reply was timely filed. See MPEP §503. For example, if the application has been held abandoned for failure to file a reply to a first Office action, and applicant has a postcard receipt showing that an amendment was timely filed in response to the Office action, then the holding of abandonment should be withdrawn upon the filing of a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment. When the reply is shown to have been timely filed based on a postcard receipt, the reply must be entered into PALM using the date of receipt of the reply as shown on the post card receipt.

Where a certificate of mailing under 37 C.F.R. §1.8, but not a postcard receipt, is relied upon in a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment, see 37 C.F.R. 1.8(b) and MPEP §512. As stated in 37 C.F.R. §1.8(b)(3) the statement that attests to the previous timely mailing or transmission of the correspondence must be on a personal knowledge basis, or to the satisfaction of the Director of the USPTO. If the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing is not made by the person who signed the Certificate of Mailing (i.e., there is no personal knowledge basis), then the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing should include evidence that supports the conclusion that the correspondence was actually mailed (e.g., copies of a mailing log establishing that correspondence was mailed for that application). When the correspondence is shown to have been timely filed based on a certificate of mailing, the correspondence is entered

⁵ See: MPEP §711.03(c)(I)(A).

into PALM with the actual date of receipt (i.e., the date that the duplicate copy of the papers was filed with the statement under 37 C.F.R. §1.8).

37 C.F.R. §1.8(b) also permits applicant to notify the Office of a previous mailing or transmission of correspondence and submit a statement under 37 C.F.R. §1.8(b)(3) accompanied by a duplicate copy of the correspondence when a reasonable amount of time (e.g., more than one month) has elapsed from the time of mailing or transmitting of the correspondence. Applicant does not have to wait until the application becomes abandoned before notifying the Office of the previous mailing or transmission of the correspondence. Applicant should check the private Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system for the status of the correspondence before notifying the Office. See MPEP §512.⁶

Petitioner's reply to the Notice of Abandonment was late under the rule (37 C.F.R. §1.181), and Petitioner is reminded of the guidance set forth in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c) (in pertinent part):

C. Treatment of Untimely Petition To Withdraw Holding of Abandonment

37 C.F.R. 1.181(f) provides that, *inter alia*, except as otherwise provided, any petition not filed within 2 months from the action complained of may be dismissed as untimely. Therefore, any petition (under 37 C.F.R. §1.181) to withdraw the holding of abandonment not filed within 2 months of the mail date of a notice of abandonment (the action complained of) may be dismissed as untimely. 37 C.F.R. §1.181(f).

Rather than dismiss an untimely petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment under 37 C.F.R. §1.181(f), the Office may require a terminal disclaimer as a condition of granting an untimely petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment.

3. Utility and Plant Applications Filed on or After May 29, 2000

In utility and plant applications filed on or after May 29, 2000, a terminal disclaimer should **not** be required as a condition of granting an untimely petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment. This is because any patent term adjustment is automatically reduced under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.704(c)(4) in applications subject to the patent term adjustment provisions of the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) if a petition to withdraw a holding of abandonment is not filed within two months from the mailing date of the notice of abandonment, and if applicant does not receive the notice of abandonment, any patent term adjustment is reduced under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.704(a) by a period equal to the period of time during which the applicant

⁶ See: MPEP §711.03(c) (I)(B).

“failed to engage in reasonable efforts to conclude prosecution” (processing or examination) of the application.

Where the record indicates that the applicant intentionally delayed the filing of a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment, the Office may simply dismiss the petition as untimely (37 C.F.R. §1.181(f)) solely on the basis of such intentional delay in taking action in the application without further addressing the merits of the petition. Obviously, intentional delay in seeking the revival of an abandoned application precludes relief under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) or (b) (***).

The record (including the petition filed on 8 September, 2010) does not necessitate a finding that the delay between midnight 27 March, 2007 (the date of abandonment), and 8 September, 2010 (the date of the filing of grantable petition), was not unintentional.

Rather, the Patent and Trademark Office is relying in this matter on the duty of candor and good faith of Petitioner/Counsel John E Curtain (Reg. No. 37,602) when accepting Petitioners' representation that the delay in filing the response was unintentional.⁷

Out of an abundance of caution, Petitioners always are reminded that the filing of a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 does not toll any periods that may be running any action by the Office and a petition seeking relief under the regulation must be filed within two (2) months of the act complained of (*see*: 37 C.F.R. §1.181(f)), and those registered to practice and all others who make representations before the Office must inquire into the underlying facts of representations made to the Office and support averments with the appropriate documentation—since all owe to the Office the continuing duty to disclose.⁸

The availability of applications and application papers online to applicants/practitioners who diligently associate their Customer Number with the respective application(s) now provides an applicant/practitioner on-demand information as to events/transactions in an application.

⁷ See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing the statement required by 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) to the Patent and Trademark Office).

⁸ See supplement of 17 June, 1999. The Patent and Trademark Office is relying on Petitioner's duty of candor and good faith and accepting a statement made by Petitioner. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing statements to the Patent and Trademark Office).

STATUTES, REGULATIONS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994). And the regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a Petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application.^{9, 10}

Moreover, the Office has set forth in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I) the showing and timeliness requirements for a proper showing for relief under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 in these matters.

Decisions on reviving abandoned applications on the basis of "unavoidable" delay have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable:

The word 'unavoidable' . . . is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business. It permits them in the exercise of this care to rely upon the ordinary and trustworthy agencies of mail and telegraph, worthy and reliable employees, and such other means and instrumentalities as are usually employed in such important business. If unexpectedly, or through the unforeseen fault or imperfection of these agencies and instrumentalities, there occurs a failure, it may properly be said to be unavoidable, all other conditions of promptness in its rectification being present.¹¹

Allegations as to the Request to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment

The guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I) specifies the showing required and how it is to be made and supported.

⁹ See: Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

¹⁰ The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition. (Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.) Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable. Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a). And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter. Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care. (By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.)

¹¹ In re Mattullath, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (1912)(quoting Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)); see also Winkler v. Ladd, 221 F. Supp. 550, 552, 138 USPQ 666, 167-68 (D.D.C. 1963), aff'd, 143 USPQ 172 (D.C. Cir. 1963); Ex parte Henrich, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a "case-by-case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account." Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). Finally, a petition cannot be granted where a petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing that the delay was "unavoidable." Haines v. Quigg, 673 F. Supp. 314, 316-17, 5 USPQ2d 1130, 1131-32 (N.D. Ind. 1987).

Petitioner appears not to have satisfied the showing and timeliness requirements.

As to Allegations of
Unintentional Delay

The requirements of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee therefor, a reply, a proper statement of unintentional delay under the regulation, and, where applicable, a terminal disclaimer and fee.

It appears that the requirements under the Rule have been satisfied.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, the petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is **dismissed**; the petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **granted**.

The instant application is released to the Technology Center/AU 2424 for further processing in due course.

Petitioner may find it beneficial to view Private PAIR within a fortnight of the instant decision to ensure that the revival has been acknowledged by the TC/AU in response to this decision. It is noted that all inquiries with regard to status need be directed to the TC/AU where that change of status must be effected—that does not occur in the Office of Petitions.

Telephone inquiries regarding this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214—it is noted, however, that all practice before the Office is in writing (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.2¹²) and the proper authority for action on any matter in this regard are the statutes (35 U.S.C.), regulations (37 C.F.R.) and the commentary on policy (MPEP). Therefore, no telephone discussion may be controlling or considered authority for Petitioner's action(s).



/John J. Gillon, Jr./
John J. Gillon, Jr.
Senior Attorney
Office of Petitions

¹² The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2 provide:

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